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# Dudley to Jim, 12 December 1957

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I've seen a couple of futbol games recently. Real Madrid is the champion of Europe, rolling in wealth, they tell me -- they should be; there have been 120,000 at each of the games I've seen -- and they buy up the best players from Spain and South America. It is almost unbelievable what these fellows can do with the ball with their feet and heads, and their faking is magnificent. Nancy's high school has a basket ball team but in their last two games they have been beaten by Spanish schools. Nancy tells me that this afternoon the opposing team showed up with a cheering section composed entirely of priests and beat the hell out of the American boys.

We have made several sight-seeing trips in our car, the most interesting being to Mérida near the the border of Portugal, where the Roman remains, built in the first century B. C., are said to be the best in Spain. We can't decide whether to attempt a trip during the holidays. In the north, the weather will be bad, and we want to save the south for spring. Just after Christmas I shall take part in a four-day conference at El Escorial of Spanish business and professional men who have visited the U.S. I am to lead the panel ~~panel~~ on the race problem in the States. This would be a golden opportunity for you, but I shall conduct myself with restraint. Actually, despite the opposite impression at home, I do not find that the Spaniards are very much interested in the Negro question. For one thing, they usually do not understand what all the fuss is about. I have been serving also as a member of the Spanish-American committee that has interviewed over a hundred applicants for scholarships to study in the U.S. next year. It has been interesting, but tiring.

Congresswoman Church and Congressman O'Hara, both from Illinois, visited me and my classes Tuesday. They were happy because I let them make speeches, and they made a very good impression.

According to the Madrid newspapers, the Spanish were innocently minding their own business on the barren sands of Ifni when the Moroccan thugs crept in and murdered a number of gallant young Spanish officers. According to the American papers, Mohammed V claims that the Spaniards have violated their agreement. Apparently, Spain was ready to hand the territory over to Morocco when indications of oil were found there.

Nancy asks that I write that she is very happy about your recovery. Anita has made no statement.

Sincerely,

Dudley



General Pardiñas, 78  
Madrid, Spain  
December 12, 1957

Dear Jim,

When word first came of your serious illness, I wanted to write you, but I didn't because I did not know how desperate your situation was, and consequently what tone I should try to take. Now that we learn today from Dutch's Christmas card that you have recovered, I can write to say that we were greatly concerned about you, and that we are happy that you are normal again. You must be completely recovered because Dutch says that you are planning to meet your classes. I hope that this experience will be a good lesson to you, and that you have realized that you can't go on forever burning all surfaces of the candle. I hope also that when you were in the hospital you meditated sufficiently on the state of your soul. Dutch wrote also of Friley's actions at the poker club, on which perhaps I should not pass judgment. I can understand, however, that the club having believed that it was free of your alternate exuberance and depression and your childish attempts to pretend you take chances must have been greatly put out when you appeared like the ghost from someone's unhappy past. Whatever else is involved, though, we are delighted that you are in circulation again.

I am somewhat accoutumed now to teaching at the University, although there are mysteries that continually baffle me. My students assured me that no tests were ever given before the final exams in June. Then I discovered that most of the other professors were giving tests before the Christmas vacation, and so I set up some in my classes. In one class in which the attendance has been twenty or less forty people showed up and took the test. In another class, in which I usually have about thirty-five, sixty people appeared for the test. These people are the libres, who do not register and who pay no fees but who wander from class to class, and who take exams with the hope that they can do well enough to get credit on the course. Some of them have failed the course in past years. They fortify themselves with books and notes and hope for the best. There is also the matter of the Christmas holidays. I understand that the vacation begins officially on the 20th, but by today about two-thirds of the students had disappeared. One explanation is that these students do not live in Madrid, and that they must get an early start in order to be home for Christmas. I am told also that it will take many of them some time to get back after Christmas. Most of the students write their tests in Spanish in god-awful scripts.

At last accounts John had about decided to pass up a trip to Oxford during the Christmas holidays, but he may have changed his mind again. He managed to get passing grades on all his subjects at mid-term, but not much more. I think the transition to college work was pretty tough on him. He managed to stay on the first team of the freshman football squad all season, and the team had a good year until they let Harvard upset them in the final game.